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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ex-State Employee Receives Jail Sentence for Fraud

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Aug. 9, 2006) A former state employee was sentenced today to 30 days in jail and three years supervised probation after pleading guilty in Maricopa County Superior Court to one count of fraud. She was accused of using others' welfare benefits for personal gain.

Jessie Q. Harbarger, 48, of Glendale, worked for the Department of Economic Security, issuing electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards to qualifying welfare applicants and replacing defective cards. An EBT card is similar to a debit card and allows the recipient to obtain benefits directly at a store or ATM machine. On three separate occasions during 2004, Harbarger used welfare recipients' accounts to issue EBT cards for her own use.

Harbarger, of Glendale, was ordered to pay restitution to DES in the amount of \$2,451. She is also required to perform 24 hours of community service. She was sentenced by Maricopa County Superior Court Commissioner Steven P. Lynch.

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